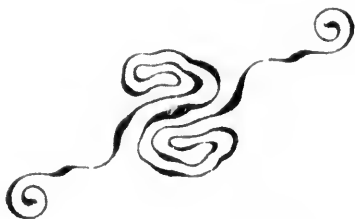
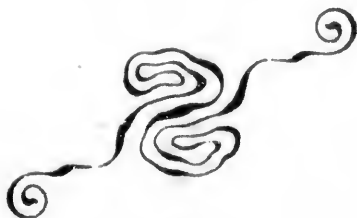


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Fugitives.





☞ FUGITIVES. ☞



BY JAMES C. HODGINS.



Coronto :

DANIEL ROSE, PRINTER, 24 ADELAIDE ST. W.

1891.





: : To my Friends : :





FUGITIVES.



SPRING.

Once more the robin flutes in glee
On heat returning.
The living juices in the trees
Are shooting in the early leaves .
The blossoms break ;
And lusty nature wide-a-wake
Her pleasant task sits learning.

The fleecy clouds scud o'er the blue
In sudden glory.
The woods are full of whistling birds,
And nature, in strange mystic words,
Relates once more,
In the same strains as oft before,
The one old golden story :

That he who lives close to her heart,
Nor spurns her warning,
Shall all life's cunning secrets learn :
The trill of bird, the tress of fern,
The roar of seas, .
The music of the wind swept trees,
The glory of the morning ;

Shall learn the noiseless laws of life,
 The truths of beauty,
 And find that nature's meanest guise
 Is full of wonder and surprise;
 That everything
 Doth to the surface ever bring
 The blessedness of duty.

QU'APPELLE.

Long time ago, the curious legend runs,
 A voyageur was floating through these fells,
 And, as he drifted on his idle way
 Half sleepy o'er his task, lo! suddenly,
 Upon the motionless air he heard a sound.
 He ^{sharply} suddenly turned, and in his native speech
 Sent back in ringing tones the words Qu'Appelle
 "Who calls," and straightway from an hundred vales
 Came back the self-same words in mocking tones,
 Now dim, now clear, as when a passing cloud
 Veils the clear trumpet blast of flying swan,
 Wending its way from northern nesting grounds,
 Far to the southern lands of rice and cane.
 At times 'twould fade amid the clouds of mist
 That swayed and trembled in the morning air;
 Again ring out in bold and swelling tones
 Like bugle notes upon a windless sea.
 And so, in time, they called the vale Qu'Appelle.
 Thus in the voyage o'er the stream of time
 We oft in listless moments hear a voice
 That startles to surprise the innermost self,
 And wakes a thousand echoes in the soul,

Only illusive echoes vaguely float
Within the consciouness that holds the past.
We know not whose the voice, or wherefore sent,
And yet we feel some spirit touched us there.

I plucked a rose to day,
It was dewy and fresh and sweet,
And the warriors on its spray
Seemed bold champions meet
To protect it safe away.

I wore it a little while,
And it faded quickly away ;
And with it fled laughter and life,
And light of a golden day,
Nor could love my heart beguile.

Its crimson, petalous whorls
Fluttered like flakes away,
And its warriors dead to quarrels
Sank in the heat of day
Like so many lifeless churls.

My rose was a glowing hope,
 High soaring and full of might,
 And the thorns were resolves to cope
 With all fortune, or hard, or light—
 'Twas all clear once, now I grope.

SOLILOQUY OF ŒDIPUS AT THE THREE CROSS ROADS.

Whither shall I go? Oh wrath and woeful day!
 Why was I brought into this tortured state?
 Why did I not what time my puny face
 Wrinkled with its first frown give up to death
 This clinging curse of life so fatally given?
 So frail I was when first the nourishing air
 Upheld me gasping in a mother's arms
 'Twas but a toss if life should conquer death.
 How painless death had been! How sweet a birth
 Mid fair Elysian fields in a new form
 Born of some deathless nymph!
 Ye stars so pale, and pure, and passionless,
 Oh guide ye me on my uncertain course,
 And point me to some distant land where I
 May foil if it be possible the God.
 Oh Moira! black browed goddess, stay thy hand,
 Nor hurl me on the stormy seas of time,
 But let my bark reach some calm peaceful shore!
 And thou, Apollo, on thy golden reed,
 Blow a sweet healing strain, so my sad soul
 May courage take ere the tough fight begin!
 In vain I flee! The God's will must be done;
 And, when in terror I would most evade,

I but accomplish what he designates.
 I would I might in a pure dreamless state
 Sleep on forever painless, passionless,
 Deaf to the roar of life, its loves and hates.
 Methought I heard the roll of chariot wheels,
 Now smoothly gliding on the level road,
 Now rattling o'er the stones! Oh Gods benign!
 Pan, Hermes, thou thyself great Father Zeus
 Ward off all harm, and keep my hands from blood!

THE SUPREMACY OF LAW.

Suppose that some fair day when all the air
 Lies sleeping on the bosom of the sea,
 And clouds hang lazily above the fields,
 And cattle lie beneath the shady trees,
 And piping insects shrill their fine clear notes,
 And man, care-freed, rest in a pleasant mood,
 Eased from the infinite weight that presses in,
 And woman taste the sweets of perfect bliss,
 Passion possessed alone with love and life—

Suppose on such a day when all seems calm,
 And every warring element has truced,
 That in a moment a Vesuvius,
 Of sudden ruin hurl upon the world,
 And straightway mountains topple, cities fall,
 The seas exhaust in steam, and the pent fire,
 Long held, belch forth in streams of living flame,
 And the vast orbs clash madly each on each,
 What then? Ought we in passionate thought curse
 God,

And yield the ghost in bitter throes of hate?
 Not if the chaos live and move in Law,
 And better bloom from out a dead past's best.

BRAHMA.

Ere ever man had come
 Into the light of being,
 And the vast all lay dumb
 Unheeding and unseeing
 In cyclic storms I swept.

Before the orbs had risen
 From out of the inane,
 Like a soul loosed from prison,
 I scoured the endless plain,
 The cause, the end, the all.

I form the hosts adoring,
 The insect of an hour,
 The hoarse sea in its roaring
 Exulteth in my power.

I am the strength of hills.

I glimmer, I glow, I fade,
 So passes mortal life!
 I leap out of death self made:
 Again begins the strife,
 And endeth as before.

Touch me, for I am present,
 And low beneath thy feet!
 Taste me, for I am pleasant
 Unto the mouth most sweet!
 I am the alone God.

AN IMAGINARY CONVERSATION.

FATHER TOBIAS —

Peace to thee Father ! why that haggard face ?
I trust the weight of sin lies light on thee !

FATHER FRANCESCO —

Heavy as lead, I'm crushed beneath its weight,
And I oft wish that death would ease my load
By easing me of life.

FATHER TOBIAS —

Thou hast an over tender conscience, brother !
Now, as for me, I fill the strict commands
Of Holy Mother Church, and leave my cares
To whomsoever is in search of such,
Knowing that whilst our flesh is surely damned,
And we fast hurrying to the mouldy tomb,
There still are cravings not to be despised,
And 'tis as well to stay one's stomach with
A leg of fowl, garnished with sweet green peas,
And tickle it with a glass of burgundy,
As 'tis to take a mouldy crust and think
That a kind Father loves to see his gifts
Despised and left for unregenerate lips,
Or takes delight in a dyspeptic saint.
Methinks the gracious Father loves to see
A happy soul, one who with smiling face,
Can take his grace and take his turkey too,
Returning thanks for both,

HAPPINESS.

It is happiness to know
 That amid life's stress and woe
 Souls may still be glory crowned
 And to right more firmly bound.

PLEASURE.

It is pleasure pure and sweet,
 When our tired wearied feet
 Are love-urged on mercy's quest
 In such weariness is rest.

"THE LITTLE RIFT."

Love! Thou and I, must soul and soul,
 Taste joys divine and sorrows sharp
 As death, why then should either warp
 The golden law that guides to goal ?

One little alien gust may charge
 A lucid sanguine summer day,
 Turn all its brave tints into grey,
 And ravage make through all its range.

One little lapse in tender grace,
 (Or thine or mine the fault or sin)
 May turn love's melody to din,
 Life unto vulgar commonplace.

THE TRUTH TELLER.

He is truthful who dares say
 In the open court of day
 All that God to him hath shown
 Though it cause a world to moan.

"RESOLUT ZU LEBEN."

The soul can be itself, act out its God,
 Throttle low ends, attain the wise and fair,
 And standing on a summit, praise and laud ;
 Like Jesus when his great heart broke in twain,
 Or Socrates by bitter hemlock slain.

SONNET.

A day of storm and wind, and then a calm,
 An olive golden light athwart a stream,
 The foliage pierced by many a trembling gleam,
 And over all soft airs—God's healing balm.
 Nature all round was chaunting a low psalm,
 Such as rapt Saint might hear, and hearing deem,
 That God was in his ecstasy and dream,
 And he transfigured holding forth a palm.

I, in these dusty streets still feel the spell,
 Of that calm hour, its healthful influence
 Vanishes not but lingers on in sense,
 Like perfume sweet of flower from forest dell.

So should I wish when leaden grow these eyes
 To pass all tranquil into paradise.

SONNET.

Today I stood perplexed with doubt and care,
 Scarce knowing where to turn and all unsure,
 Whether man's hard won knowledge would endure,
 Beyond life's now. Faith cowered to despair,
 And goodness, beauty, truth— all counted fair,
 In highest reach of thought— failed to allure
 Me, faithless grown. The world lay mean and poor,
 And life seemed scarcely worth a further dare.

Impetuous, I stumbled o'er a clod,
 That lay upon the dank and desolate field.
 Then mused I: 'Tis as ancient as the God.
 Had I the power, this shapeless mass should yield
 The boon desired, causing my lips to laud
 The love wherewith the clod, I, all are sealed."

REMINISCENCE.

TO A. K. W.

The storm waxed fierce, but in a little nook
 Sheltered astern, where the wind smote in vain,
 We two, unknown before, seemed strangely fain
 To read each others lives as in a book.
 And thought flew forth to thought, and life to look,
 What time our steel clad courser smote the main,
 And bore us swiftly through the mist and rain.
 Then when the storm shrilled louder, we be-took
 Ourselves into the gorgeous warm saloon,
 And whiled the hours with story and with song.
 At times our talk was stifled in the croon
 Of north wind battling like a Titan strong.
 Oh! that one might forever laugh in glee,
 Nor pay the fines of frail mortality!

PURPOSE.

Take not a long fled past
 As proof of man's hard fate !
 Brood not upon the vast,
 But struggle for the great !

Thou art, and God is here.
 He willed thee thus to be.
 Act great in scorn of fear,
 Nor moan thy destiny !

What though man's puny mind
 May not his vastness grasp,
 Or searching fail to find
 Where he his world doth clasp ;

When every atom-change
 Points to the sway of mind,
 And through creation's range
 No creature walketh blind.

THE OUTER UNKNOWN.

Could we but know
 What lies beyond life's pale,
 How boldly would each laggard set his sail !
 How cheerily each heart would answer heart,
 What time the sudden summons came to part
 From here to there no longer an unknown !
 Could we but know !

THE BETTER PART.

What though man's mind may not
Travel beyond the real?
What though with passion hot
He strive for an ideal?

If the all can be known
As a part, and known sure,
Better to stifle moan,
Lordlier to endure.

Better to fall in fight
Though truth should lose the day
Than turn in coward flight,
Or traitor shirk the fray.

Great actions lie unborn
Waiting the fuller day.
Proud laurels fade unworn,
Because weak hearts delay.

Learn then this highest truth :
Tis the hot fleeting hour,
Holdeth all joy and ruth,
All weakness and all power.

